Employees Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 to reduce the threshold for coverage under the provident fund from 20 employees to 10 has been referred to the Central Board of Trustees (EPF) for tripartite discussion. It is too early to assess the impact on employment in the event the threshold of coverage is reduced.

Industrial Disputes and Contract Labour Acts

2049. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act and Contract Labour Act are proposed to be considered in the light of the report of the Second Labour Commission which is yet to be received by Government; and

(b) if so, by when the report of the Commission is expected to be received?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Amendments in labour laws is a continuous process and involves consultation with the tripartite partners and takes time. It may, therefore, not be administratively expedient to put a stop to the process of carrying out amendments to the existing laws which are long panding merely because National Commission on Labour has been constituted.

(b) The Second National Commission on Labour constituted vide Resolution dated 15th Oct., 1999 will make its recommendations as soon as practicable but not later than 24 months from the date of publication of the Resolution in the Gazette of India. In other words, the report of the Commission is expected to be received by 15.10.2001.

Working of EPF

2050. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to revitalise, streamline and modernise working of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation in the country under the 'Reinventing EPF India' plan unveiled by him recently;

(b) if so, the features of the plan;

(c) the benefits that would accrue to workers particularly for settlement of their claims for which presently they have to go from pillar to post for months and sometimes even for years;

(d) whether plan would be applicable and implemented in all the industries and towns; and

(e) by when, the aforesaid Plan is likely to be implemented and be functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (e) A modernisation programme namely 'Reinventing Employees Provident Fund—India' has been launched by the Employees Provident Fund Organisation. It involves re-engineering of the existing work process, re-tooling of accounting system and setting up of an information technology/computer enabled system through networking of all offices of Employees Provident Fund Organisation. It envisages providing all services to every member from any EPF location on a real-time basis. This modernisation programme will enable the subscriber to access his account balance and file his claim from any of the Offices of the EPFO as against the present system which limits him to only one office where he is registered and to reduce the time between receipt of claim to issue of a cheque to 2-3 days as against the present stipulated time of 30 days.

The first phase of the modernization programme involving setting up of pilot centres in six locations covering all four zones, is proposed to be made operational in a time span of 24 months. After stabilization of six pilot centers the re-designed system is proposed to be replicated all over the country in a phased manner.

Beedi workers in the country

† 2051. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of 'beedi workers' in the country at present, State-wise;

(b) the details of the various schemes implemented by Government

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.